

As noted earlier, Superfund distinguishes between short-term and long-term responses to threats posed by hazardous substances. Short-term responses, also called removal actions, address immediate threats to public health and the environment. Region III's Emergency Response and Removal Program has compiled an impressive record of accomplishment in protecting citizens, businesses and the environment in the Mid-Atlantic states over the past 20 years, investigating and aggressively addressing chemical releases, explosions, extreme soil and water contamination, and oil spills through the Oil Program.

More than 100 emergency response actions have been initiated throughout Maryland to remove immediate threats to public health and the environment.

EPA worked with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) during the severe flooding and devastation caused by Hurricane Floyd last year. EPA canvassed waterways for 'orphan' drums and tanks throughout portions of the Mid-Atlantic region. Working in unison with federal, state and local responders, Region III quick response teams also helped citizens ensure their flooded homes were safe from hazardous substance leaks and/or vapors.

We're also focused on the safe handling of chemicals. This topic has generated a great deal of national attention following the infamous 1984 Bhopal chemical disaster, and more recently, the deliberate chemical release in a Tokyo subway.



EPA Region III supported FEMA during severe flooding caused by Hurricane Floyd last year.



EPA canvassed waterways for 'orphan' drums and tanks that contained hazardous materials.

EPA Region III has removed
716,609
gallons of hazardous liquids and
29,270
cubic yards of contaminated soil and solid waste
in Maryland.

(note: these amounts are for Superfund-lead removals that have been completed. PRPs and federal facilities do not typically report amounts of waste removed)

Region III's Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Prevention (CEPP) Program has responded to these growing issues and concerns, providing leadership, building partnerships and offering technical assistance to:

- Prevent and prepare for chemical emergencies;
- Respond to environmental crises;
- Inform the public about chemical hazards in their community, and
- Share lessons learned about chemical accidents.



EPA's emergency response and removal branch addresses oil spills throughout the Mid-Atlantic states.

EPA prepares for contingencies such as biological and chemical warfare incidents, local preparedness issues, and first responder safety. The Mid-Atlantic Region also offers hazardous materials response training at no charge to about 1,000 firefighters, paramedics, hospital and emergency workers, military and police officers each year.

Region III's preparedness team also plays an integral role in vital security issues at national events. When the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) held its 50th Anniversary Summit in Washington, D.C. last year, intense preparation was required for the largest gathering of world leaders ever in the nation's capital. In order to shorten potential response times for any accidental or deliberate hazardous substance release, Region III was part of the multi-agency task force whose 'behind-the-scenes' efforts resulted not only in a successful summit, but also a new operations supplement to the nation's Federal Response Plan.

And when Philadelphia plays host to this year's Republican National Convention July 31 through August 4, Region III employees will work closely with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and FEMA to ensure shortened response times for any potential hazardous substance release, accidental or intentional, at this massive gathering of visitors from all over the world.

Experience has shown that emergency preparedness improves when local stakeholders share information and participate in environmental decision-making. To that end, the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), coupled with the Clean Air Act (CAA), enable citizens to become knowledgeable about facilities that report hazardous chemicals that they store or handle, by providing public access to the reports.

Last year, EPA required companies that store or handle hazardous wastes to submit Risk Management Plans (RMPs) to inform the public of what they are doing to prevent accidents, as well as how they plan to manage their chemicals responsibly. Summaries of these plans are now available to the public to help us better understand the chemical risks in our communities.